



Ponderings

Seasonal newsletter of the
Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek
Summer 2023/24 | Issue 81

advocate educate interpret participate rehabilitate revegetate



Naturalising The Creek Continues...



Creek Naturalisation Continues

Work continues on the *Reimagining your Moonee Ponds Creek* project at Brosnan Crescent, so again we report on the latest developments and what still needs to be done to finish the project.

We have our usual range of council news, including news about Litter Clean ups along the Creek.

We feature an article on the History of the Creek based on Kelvin Thomson's talk to the Coburg Historical Society. This was a very interesting presentation which also included a discussion about the history of the FoMPC which I will include in the next edition.

There are four new Life Members of the FoMPC, we have short biographies on each, plus the President's report for the last year.

Finally, best regards for Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of our readers!

David Widdowson, Editor

Thanks to Kaye Oddie, Rachel Lopes, Nina Franceschi, Neil Sutton, Charlotte Napper and Kelvin Thomson for their assistance with the production of this issue.

Cover images by Joanne Dietrich, Adam Wojcik, Nina and David.

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Brosnan Crescent Creek Naturalisation Project



Project Update

- Most of the new Brosnan Crescent concrete shared path (Moonee Valley Council side) is now open, with a small section to be completed by the end of November 2023. Line markings on the path will be done before Christmas, and permanent safety fencing along some sections of the path will be installed in early 2024. (The elevated section above is designed to protect tree roots).
- A new gravel path will replace the asphalt path on top of the southern bank of the creek (Moonee Valley Council side). These works will be happening from October to late December 2023.
- About 80% of the rockwork along both creek banks has been completed. The remaining sections will be completed once all the new shared paths are complete.
- In-stream channel rockwork (on the bottom of the creek) is steadily progressing. It's a slow and meticulous process to place the rocks in such a way to make it look as 'natural' as possible, and we anticipate that we'll complete this activity by late December 2023.

Still to do — December 2023 to April 2024

- The planting of more than 43,000 native trees, grasses and shrubs will be completed in a staged manner. While some have been planted, most of the revegetation will be done after the hot summer months to ensure the plants' best chance of survival.
- We'll be planting approximately 400 aquatic plants on the bottom of the creek channel in December 2023.
- Stage 4: Construction of new bridge in April 2024 (during school holidays). Due to delays with the design, the bridge will now be built in the school holidays after Term 1 in early to mid April 2024.
- Stage 5: Construction of Merri-bek shared paths—December 2023 to late March 2024.
- Stage 6: Construction of pond, channel bank terracing, and new stairs, December 2023 to late March 2024.





CHAIN OF PONDS

Transforming the Moonee Ponds Creek

By Rachel Lopes

In the coming weeks, we're excited to walk the creek with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation Elders and members to develop a Cultural Immersive Trail on the Moonee Ponds Creek.

The project aims to;

- Preserve, record and showcase Wurundjeri living culture, history and storytelling of the Moonee Ponds Creek.
- Provide interactive information on the indigenous history of the Moonee Ponds Creek.
- Share indigenous cultural experiences with the broader community.
- Encourage and increase visitation to the Moonee Ponds Creek, and
- Be free and accessible to the public all year.

End of Year Lunch

We have our end-of year celebration lunch and tour of the **Reimagining MPC site** on December 5th from 11am to 1pm. All Chain of Ponds / Moonee Ponds Creek partners are invited.

Litter Clean-ups by Neil Sutton



Geoff is cleaning up the Creek!

Geoff, our automatic river cleaner, has been installed in the Moonee Ponds Creek just upstream from the Dynon Road bridge, where the old Bandelong litter trap was located.

The three main features which makes *Geoff* so much better than the old Bandelong trap are:

- (1) the booms, which feed litter towards the conveyor belt (and into the skip), stretch across the entire creek, meaning litter cannot pass around either side as with the older trap,
- (2) the conveyor belt which hauls the litter out of the water and into a skip, meaning that litter does not have time to absorb water and sink into the water column (e.g. cigarette butts).

- 3) Litter as small as 2mm, so small items such as polystyrene balls, cigarette butts, and microplastics, are not left to float up and down the river with the tide. It's a complete game changer, *Geoff* is getting so much more litter out of the creek and in doing so cleaning up the lower reaches of the creek and seriously reducing the amount of plastic debris making its way out to the Bay. "We love you Geoff!"

Five Mile Creek Community Litter Clean/audit

Moonee Valley Sustainability led the last clean-up of the year on Five Mile Creek collecting a whopping 115kgs of litter with 40+ passionate volunteers. Thanks MVS for your dedication to this important tributary of the Moonee Ponds Creek all year, and we look forward to working with you on the litter education project around Keilor Road early next year.

Otway Crescent Drain

Neil led a small group of dedicated volunteers and collected 50+kgs of litter, plus 3 shopping trollies and 4 car tyres. This waterway is filling up with litter faster than we can clean it, so stay tuned for more events in this area and a litter education program upstream at the source at Roxburgh Park Shopping/ transport precinct.



Ocean Crusader Community Clean-ups

It's been busy month for our dedicated litter cleaning community down in the lower reaches of the MPC, as thanks to a grant from the City of Melbourne, the Chain of Ponds Collaboration partnered with Ocean Crusaders to run a series of clean-up events which resulted in almost 2000 kg of rubbish being removed from the creek. Amazing people from across the catchment descended on the creek in canoes, on boats, and on foot to remove all sorts of rubbish from the creek and its surrounds, filling up a 16 cubic meter skip bin, a truck, and several large skip bags. The creek looks very nice and clean; go and see for yourselves!

A huge thankyou goes out to (1) all the dedicated volunteers involved, (2) Ocean Crusaders for your passion and hard work, and (3) the City of Melbourne for funding these events. Keep your eyes and ears glued to our Facebook page and website as there will be more events like this popping up during the first half of next year. We want to build on this engagement and knowledge to connect more people to the creek, to change behaviour, and to advocate for changing legislation and a higher investment in infrastructure that actually works.



Moonee Valley Draft Open Space Strategy

Moonee Valley City Council is updating its Open Space Strategy and wants to hear feedback from the community. The new Moonee Valley Open Space Strategy will guide Moonee Valley's open spaces for the next 10 years.

Moonee Valley hosts a range of diverse open spaces from conservation reserves along our waterways, large garden style parks and mixed use sporting reserves through to smaller open spaces and urban plazas. Various challenges impact our open space such as population growth and density, climate change, the biodiversity crisis and competing demands for available open space. The draft Strategy includes ways to address these impacts to provide a healthy, vibrant and resilient open space network now and into the future.

A draft Open Space Strategy has now been prepared which includes a vision, strategic directions, objectives and prioritisation criteria. These will guide how Council selects and prioritises investment in open space over the next ten years.

A set of Key Actions have also been prepared. The Key Actions are significant initiatives Council will take for the Strategy. They are not an exhaustive list, but provide examples of what kind of actions will be implemented once the final Strategy is endorsed by Council

You can view the draft strategy and Key Actions and provide your feedback here: <https://yoursay.mvcc.vic.gov.au/openspace> or at any Moonee Valley library. Consultation is open for feedback until 17 December.

The Health of Eucalyptus Trees in Moonee Valley

As we step out of spring and into summer, we have been keeping a watchful eye on our wonderful tree species in Moonee Valley. Recently, we have observed increased pest and disease activity among Eucalyptus trees, particularly the Eucalyptus Camaldulensis, also known as River Red Gums.

Eucalypts (continued)

Lerps from psyllids have been found on the leaves, indicating the presence of sap-sucking insects. Large numbers of psyllids can impact the overall health of these trees. Additionally, some leaves may show signs from chewing insects, possibly sawfly species. There may also be signs of Teratosphaeria, another leaf disease that has been identified on other eucalypt species in Moonee Valley this year.

While it is disheartening to notice these changes, there is no satisfactory control available for fungal leaf diseases and environmental conditions play a big role. It is possible to control pest insects with systemic pesticides. However, this is not an approach we generally take as these pesticides can cause a significant amount of harm to non-target (beneficial) insects and reduce food available for insectivores such as birds.

Eucalypts have some ability, depending on their overall health, to recover from complete defoliation. Unfortunately, we anticipate the potential loss of some weakened trees over the next 12-24 months. Nevertheless, with nature's resilience, we hope for the full recovery of most trees.



*Discover
the world
around you*

Nature Stewards is back!

The Nature Stewards program is returning in 2024! The program is run by conservation experts and hosted by Merri-bek City Council and Moonee Valley City Council. It is designed to connect individuals with their local and wider habitats and foster connections with other like-minded people. If you are interested in plants, animals, ways to care for Country, and more, the Nature Stewards program might be the perfect fit for you!

[For more information click here.](#)

Stormwater Victoria

Stormwater Victoria is running a tour of the Moonee Ponds Creek project on Thursday, 7th December. If you are interested in knowing more about the project you can register through this link:

<https://www.stormwatervictoria.com.au/events>



Merri-bek
City Council

By
Charlotte
Napper



Biodiversity Mowing Trial

Council has begun a trial to reduce mowing in some park areas across Merri-bek. A trial site has been established at Fran Street Reserve in Glenroy in the hope that it will allow increased habitat for foraging insects and pollinators. Council will monitor the maintenance and management implications of reduced mowing, as well as the biodiversity outcomes. We are also investigating what the community thinks of reducing mowing in certain areas. You can have your say at: <https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/biodiversity-mowing>

Open Space Strategy Update

The public consultation phase for the new Open Space Strategy is now closed and work on a draft strategy is well underway. The feedback from the community was extensive and a draft plan is due to be released in the coming months. If you'd like to sign up for updates on the release of the draft strategy, or find more information: <https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/open-space-strategy>.



Completed Works

The new enclosed dog park at Kingsford Smith Ulm has been completed and is now open. Indigenous plant species were included in the landscape works. A new gravel path has been completed between the Oak Park tennis club and Bryant Family Reserve in Oak Park.



2023 Wrap Up

This year in Merri-bek over 20,000 indigenous plants went in the ground, council hosted 23 conservation events with over 700 participants all learning and working to care for our natural environment.

A big thank you to the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek for another year of hard work on the ground and in advocacy for the betterment of the Moonee Ponds Creek – we look forward to continuing to work with you in 2024.

Other News



Chelmsford Street, Kensington

Open Space by Kaye Oddie

The Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek has welcomed another land purchase adjacent to the Moonee Ponds Creek to be converted into an open space reserve.

[One of the aims of the FoMPC is to secure a regional park along the Creek – the ‘Moonee Ponds Creek Parklands’.]

The City of Melbourne has purchased a warehouse at 70-90 Chelmsford St, Kensington along the lower Moonee Ponds Creek and is now seeking the community’s input for development of the site as public open space. The site is approx. 3600 square metres. It will provide open space for the existing local residential community and for the growing number of residents in the medium high rise apartment blocks being built nearby along Macaulay Rd and Stubbs St in Kensington.

In a submission, the FoMPC suggests the new reserve be an ‘oasis’ as a peaceful place to relax, i.e. for more passive recreation, with picnic table, BBQ, seats, small playground, a natural setting of grassed areas and indigenous plantings. Perimeter walls could have an historic mural and perhaps a climbing wall. Inclusion of active recreation facilities, e.g. for soccer, skate and exercise equipment were not considered appropriate in the context as a relaxing ‘oasis’ open space.

Importantly, the FoMPC seeks a connection with the adjoining ‘Kensington Embankment’ of the Creek, allowing people to access the wider open space corridor along the waterway, visually connecting with the planted embankment and also enhancing biodiversity/habitat.

To provide comment for the Chelmsford St Open Space, check the link for details and to complete an online survey:

<https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/chelmsford-street-open-space>.

Closing date is 14 December.



Judy Ingram Passes

by Maelor Himbury

November 11th — We learned today that in the early hours of this morning the former President of the Friends of the Maribyrnong — Judy Ingram—passed away. She had suffered for some time with chronic health issues which became worse in recent months, leaving her in considerable pain.

Judy's contribution to our group has been considerable. Since she took over our grant application process, she has raised thousands of dollars for planting programs and administrative costs. She developed our relationship with corporate volunteers, NAB in particular, and made sure they kept coming back by providing sumptuous "boot banquets". She also made sure that we had strong relationships with other Friends groups and spent a couple of years working with the Environment Friends Network where she was awarded the Best Friend Award.

In other volunteer work, despite her own issues, each week she would be involved in ringing up isolated people in Brimbank to make sure they had some human contact. Everyone who met her was left knowing about her passion for the environment and her deep concern for other people.

Judy was a friend and mentor to many in the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek also.

The world will be a little poorer for her passing and we will miss her immensely.



Lizard by Laurelle



Little Pied Cormorant by Maurice



Kookaburra by Laurelle



Tawny Frogmouth by Caroline



Tawny Frogmouth by Maurice



Ibis and Cormorant by Maurice



Tawny Frogmouth by Caroline



Tawny Frogmouth by Maurice



Laughing Kookaburra by Guy Gillor



Sacred Kingfisher by Caroline



Turtle by Caroline



Echidna by Laurelle



Wood Ducks by Maurice



Buff-banded Rail by Maurice

Sightings

Images by
**Laurelle Dumesny,
Caroline Mazurkiewicz
and Maurice Austin**

Information Signs for the Creek?

By the Editor



Information signs are a common feature in various parks and Reserves in the district; along the Moonee Ponds Creek, less so, but it gives us the opportunity for us to work with local councils to create them.

At top are the signs along Westbreen Creek and Djirri Djirri Reserve. Below are some signs from Napier Park and Salmon Reserve.

I suppose the Moonee Valley side of the creek with its bike path is the natural side to put them, however there is increasing traffic on the Merri-Bek side, so there is a chance to include them here as well.

So, what should the signs say? Would be good to have some old images of the creek to show how it used to look, plus maps showing its former path.

Here are some possible locations:

1) Jacana Wetlands. Maybe a photo of the area in flood, or an old map of the region or photos showing it as it was, with explanations of why it was created and when.

2) Glenroy Trestle Bridge/ viaduct, with images showing the various stages of construction, and explaining the history of the line.

3) Strathmore North Primary: a sign to point out that here the concrete was stopped from extending further up the creek, keeping it natural up to the Trestle bridge. Also pointing out the redevelopment work being done here.

4) Bell Street overpass “Malfunction Junction”, with maps and photos showing the old path of the creek through the area before the freeway went in.

5) Where the concrete ends near Cross Keys oval, again with old photos and maps showing the former path of the creek.

6) Straight section of the creek in Brunswick with maps showing old path of creek and how that was changed when the freeway went through.

7) Wide channel, freeway entrance, with old photos showing construction.

See also: Chain of Ponds Collaboration report ‘Trails, Transport and Connectivity – Principles and Design Guidelines’ 2021.





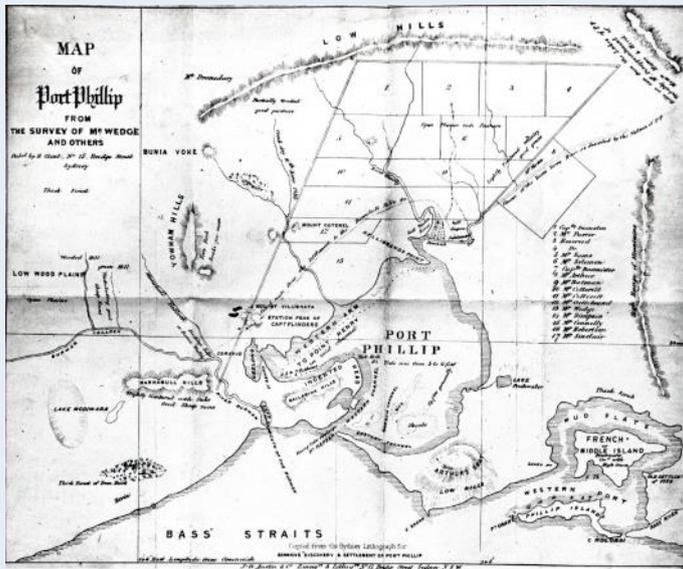
Spring!

Images by
Poppy Bell, Nina,
Carolyn Layton and
Caroline Mazurkiewicz



History of the Moonee Ponds Creek

by Kelvin Thomson



Port Phillip Bay has been rising and falling. 20,000 years ago there was no water in the bay, and indeed Bass Strait was dry. About 15,000 years ago the sea rose, flooding Bass Strait and then the Bay. Around 5000 years ago it came in as far as Essendon. Then it retreated, but climate chaos suggests it will return in the years ahead. Historical accounts describe the Moonee Ponds Creek as having “fields rimmed with magenta fire”, and “gently sloping hills, lightly covered with eucalypts and acacias”.

The landscape was one of gentle hills and open grassy woodlands in the headwaters, flowing through to a blend of Silurian escarpments and the broad expanses of the basalt plains, eventually flowing into the Greater Melbourne Swamp. Towards its mouth it is hemmed in by the Cenozoic caps of Essendon and Royal Park. The Moonee Ponds Creek was once a charming and tranquil area, with an abundance of natural vegetation and wildlife. It starts as an intrusion in granite hills north of Woodlands Historic Park.

Before European settlement, the Creek was the home of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation. The local clan, the Gunung, meaning “creek dwelling people” were connected to the Moonee Ponds Creek and other waterways in the area. There is still evidence of aboriginal occupation at the Woodlands Historic Park. There are scarred trees and surface stone tool scatters. An occupation site is listed in the Park. Other resources within the Park which were used by aborigines include kangaroos and possums, birdlife including water fowl, and plants such as Yam Daisy, tubers and gum resins.

The creek had shallow ponds of water that formed a chain along the length of the watercourse, isolated in drier times of the year, and flowing in the wetter months after heavy rains.

It now winds its way through the suburbs of Westmeadows, Tullamarine, Broadmeadows, Gowanbrae, Glenroy, Strathmore Heights and Strathmore, Oak Park, Pascoe Vale, Essendon, Brunswick West, Moonee Ponds, Ascot Vale, Flemington, Parkville, and North Melbourne before joining the Yarra River at Docklands.

The Port Phillip area was first settled by Europeans in 1835. The first land sales in the Strathmore area of the Moonee Ponds Creek were made in 1843 and 1845. Near its entry to the Yarra River, the creek formed a series of marshy ponds on the flood plain. The extensive salt marshes there were called by Europeans **Batman’s Lagoon**. With the rapid development of Melbourne due to the Victorian gold rush in the 1850s, the swamp quickly became a receptacle for waste waters from Flemington, North Melbourne and Parkville.

In 1879, Batman’s Lagoon was drained and filled to make way for the North Melbourne railway yards at its northern end. In the southern area the filled in marshes were called Dudley Flats, the home of the homeless in the 1930s Depression.

The origin of the Moonee Ponds name has a bit of controversy attached to it, but I’ll go with the version advanced by Richard Broome in his book “Between Two Creeks”. The Moonee Moonee Chain of Ponds, as it was originally called, was named after a Woiworong elder, Mooney Mooney, who died in 1840 aged 66. He is credited with, among other things, burning down and escaping from the first Melbourne gaol in 1838.

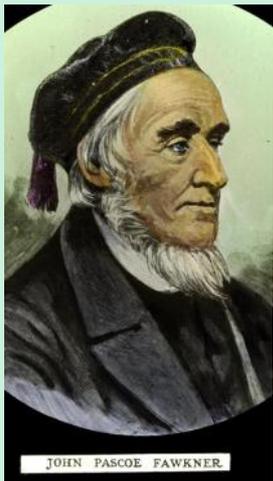
When European settlers came across it, the Moonee Ponds Creek terminated in what was known as the **Blue Lake**. In the 1840s George Gordon McCrae, looking at it from Flagstaff Hill, described the Blue Lake as “intensely blue, nearly oval and full of the clearest salt water, but is by no means deep... the whole air was heavy with the mingled odours of the golden myrnong flowers and purple fringed lilies ... curlews, ibises and blue cranes were there in numbers... Black Swans occasionally visited it, as did flocks of wild ducks...”

This area was progressively “reclaimed”, which enabled industrial developments, a fruit and vegetable market, rail yards to service the ports, shipping containers, and Coode Island for chemicals. This came at great cost to indigenous people and indigenous plants. If you follow the Moonee Ponds Creek shared path into the city, you will find it simply peters out. There is no proper signage to mark it as either a destination or a starting point. It is a terrible oversight.



At the opposite end, the headwaters of the Merri, Darebin, Moonee Ponds and Deep Creeks were a reliable and necessary resource for the successful settlement of the lands to Melbourne's north. Waterways need bridges. A bridge crossing the creek at Ardlie Street Westmeadows was built in 1854, then rebuilt as a bluestone bridge in 1869. It is still there – a fine historical monument (above).

The land to the east of the creek, between Moonee Ponds Creek and Pascoe Vale Road, in what is now Oak Park, was acquired by John Pascoe Fawcner in 1840. Historians have given him an intriguing set of characteristics, describing him variously as “plain-featured, rough-mannered, puny, active, dogmatic, abusive, cantankerous, litigious, selfless, patriotic, opposed to privilege, independent in religion, self-educated, generous, shrewd, persistent, and a one-man political movement” – not that there's anything wrong with that!



Fawcner bought 780 acres and lived there between 1840 and 1855, on a house on the hill above Marie St Oak Park – his cottage has been long demolished. You couldn't attribute to him any environmental or ecological sensitivity. In 1841 he drew up a lease for part of his land to his father, which required the lessee to “fell, cut down, grub up and otherwise destroy and remove all the native indigenous

trees, wood scrub and underwood whatsoever growing or to grow upon the said land or any part thereof except fruit trees or such trees as are or shall be marked... for ornament hedgerows or boundary marks”. That view should of course be understood as very much a product of its time. By 1845 the soils along the farms along the Moonee Ponds and Merri Creeks were producing enormous yields, including half the colony's supply of a range of vegetables and various food items.

The early prominence of local farming was reflected in the formation of the Moonee Ponds Farmers' Society. It later became the Port Phillip Farmers' Society. It held its first annual ploughing match in 1848 on the La Rose property, which went down to the creek – that homestead can still be found in Le Cateau St, Pascoe Vale. These ploughing matches are the origin of the Royal Melbourne Show.

The Creek didn't just suffer from vegetation removal. The growth of Melbourne during the second half of the nineteenth century was accompanied by a deterioration in sanitary conditions. Human wastes were discharged directly in open drains running into the creek. A report from a Royal Commission into sanitary conditions in 1890 said “the Moonee Ponds Creek is a shallow tidal creek with sandy bed, covered thickly (a foot or two deep) with sewage sludge, and forming a main trunk outlet for sewerage from Brunswick... This foul creek is bubbling with decomposition, and it is notorious for the insufferable stench which arises from it”.

Unsurprisingly, this had health consequences. For example, in 1921 a serious epidemic in North Melbourne and Kensington reported by *The Age* was attributed to the state of the creek. “It is a mere gutter of filth”. Fortunately, action was taken to sewer Melbourne and its suburbs. In the 1890s the lower Moonee Ponds Creek was used as a canal for barges carrying coal to the North Melbourne Locomotive Depot. A key impact on the creek during the 20th century was of course urban development. For example, in 1923 there was an 861 lot subdivision which is now known as Jacana.

The Westbreen Creek, a tributary of the Moonee Ponds Creek, was once host to fern gullies and lyrebirds. It became a military dumping ground in World War 2, and afterwards a tip. When houses appeared nearby, the residents complained of mosquitoes, rats, and stench. They convinced the MMBW to barrel drain it under Essex St and down to the Moonee Ponds Creek at the footbridge below Gaffney St. A couple of times I have seen Rufous Fantails at the Westbreen Creek. They are a bird that inhabits the same deep forest gullies as do Lyrebirds, so they are quite some distance from their usual habitat. Perhaps something in their DNA causes them to find the Westbreen Creek.

The Creek flooded homes in Parker Street and Avoca Crescent in Pascoe Vale in 1963 and 1966. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works decided to address the increasing frequency and severity of flooding caused by urban development, and loss of floodplain capacity, by reconstructing the Creek as an urban drain designed to evacuate stormwater as quickly as possible, resulting in the concrete drain we have now.

I'm so old I remember playing Softball on the old Herbert Reserve in 1972, before it was straightened to remove the old kink! Once again, flooding played a part in forcing the MMBW to get rid of this loop.

New work was done in the 2000s to daylight this old section of the creek, to create the lovely Herbert Street Reserve as it now is. Current pictures by Nina.

From the MMBW book, 1981:

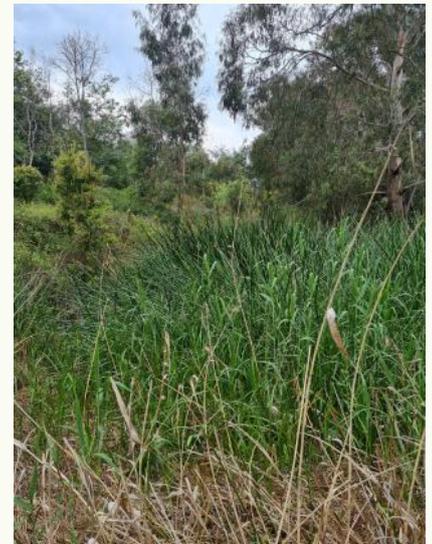
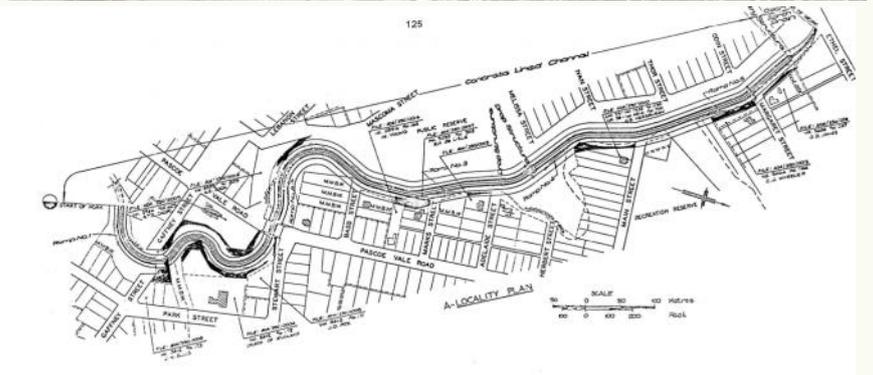
The design of the channel provided for the creek to be reshaped and partially concrete-lined between Margaret and Gaffney Streets and for its realignment at Herbert Street, where a tight loop would be cut off.

The job was issued for construction in April 1975 and completed in early 1977 at a cost of approximately one million dollars. Two energy dissipating drop structures were installed in the channel where it cuts across the tight loop at Herbert Street and a number of concrete maintenance ramps leading down to the invert were constructed.

The aerial photographs show the character and alignment of the creek between Margaret and Gaffney Streets prior to and immediately after the construction of the improvement works.

The Board of Works holds title to several pieces of land along Moonee Ponds Creek between Tate Street and Margaret Street, the land having been acquired during the 1960s and 1970s to enable drainage improvement works to be undertaken. As part of the improvement works, two tight loops along the creek were cut off.

The old course of the creek at Herbert Street is in the process of being divested, but no action would appear to have been taken to date to divest the old course of the creek at Avoca Crescent-Somerset Street. It is interesting to note that along the Herbert Street loop, two property owners whose allotments had been eroded by the creek, extended their rear fences to their property boundaries once the old course of the creek had been filled.





Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek Inc

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Life Members

The following have been made Life Members of the FoMPC. A presentation will be made at the December meeting.



The Honourable Kelvin Thomson

The Honourable Kelvin Thomson is the founder of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek. In 1989, at the age of 33, in his then electorate office in Oak Park he organised and chaired the first meeting of what was to become the Friends of the Moonee Ponds Creek. At that meeting the group resolved to call themselves the Moonee Ponds Creek Association.

For 30 years he remained its president. His commitment to this group was, and is, unwavering, this despite enormous other responsibilities, firstly in the Victorian Parliament and then as the Federal Member for Wills, including being appointed the Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Trade.

He vacated the presidency after 30 years but remains pivotal in all aspects of our group. This includes awarding environmental scholarships to secondary students that are named in the honour of his late father, Alan Thomson OAM. He is also the leader of the Moonee Ponds Creek Litter Clean Up Team. No person has contributed more to this organisation, or more generally to our local environment than Kelvin. This Life Membership is probably long overdue but certainly entirely appropriate.



Kaye Oddie

Kaye's involvement in community activism began in the 1970s. Her involvement includes Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee and now the Chain of Ponds collaboration.

Kaye was our long term secretary of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek. She is a human dynamo! She combines exemplary organisational skills with unwavering passion and knowledge. She must have written over 1000 submissions on behalf of the creek.

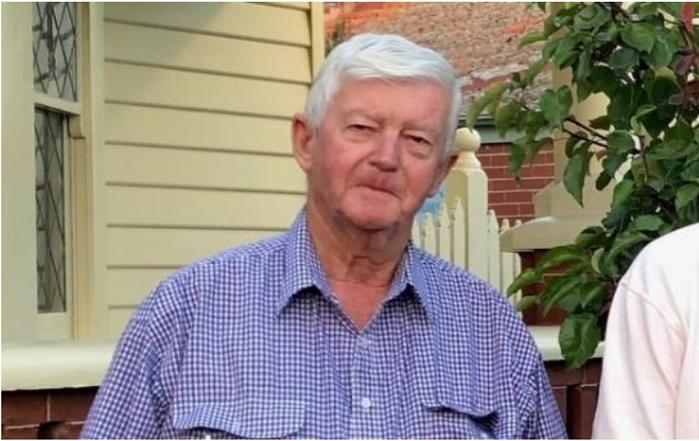
Although no longer officially our secretary, behind the scenes she continues to do a mountain of work for the creek. She remains actively involved, including coordinating infill vegetation work along the Kensington embankment.

Kaye has been involved in many of the major issues facing the creek – beginning with the 1990s City Link expansion, ongoing strategic and statutory planning issues including the Chain of Ponds Plan and developments at Westmeadows. She was actively involved in saving land at Outlook Drive, Glenroy, from development. She's also enjoyed celebrating in some big creek wins, such as the funding for the **Reimagining Your Moonee Ponds Creek** naturalisation project.

She is also involved in other environmental groups and has been a long time Secretary of the Friends of Royal Park. She is an incredibly humble person and does not seek recognition, but it is unequivocal that this group would have had greatly diminished outcomes if it was not for the exceptional efforts of Kaye.



Life Members (Continued)



Vince Aitken

Vince Aitken expertly managed the finances of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek as its treasurer for 18 years, from 2004 until 2022. Vince's career as an accountant ensured the FoMPC's finances were also expertly managed, audited and reported. As impressive as that is, Vince's contribution goes beyond the financial, his advice and support for members and many creek projects has been immense. Vince, along with others, helped reinvigorate the FoMPC as the Moonee Ponds Creek Co-ordination Committee (MPCCC) involvement in Creek activities wound down.

Vince's first involvement in Creek revegetation was getting MPCCC support in 2004, to plant trees and shrubs along the Creek embankment below his home in John Street, Oak Park. The plants are now well established and flourishing. Along the Moonee Ponds Creek, Vince established and participated in a number of other groups to revegetate the creek, along with other projects that restored the natural values of the Creek – groups including the Friends of Strathmore Ponds and the Chain of Ponds Collaboration.

Vince ceased his treasurer activities last year, only after he moved to his new home in Wodonga. His enormous contribution to the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek deserves recognition and his life membership is an appropriate acknowledgement.



Anna Lanigan

Anna has a deep lifelong passion for wildlife. She moved into the area in the 1980s, and has been campaigning to restore the creek ever since. She has been integral to the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek and for many years was the editor of **Ponderings**. She is tireless in her efforts. A number of years ago she became a Citizen Scientist and began recording frogs for the Melbourne Water Frog Census. Later she joined Birdlife Australia and started seasonal counts of the birds around the local waterways. Not only recording but photographing them so as to confirm their ID's later.

She was responsible for introducing the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek to iNaturalist. This has given the beautiful images she has recorded along the Moonee Ponds a place for all to enjoy. Her efforts in this area have been truly extraordinary. The ability of wildlife to inhabit our cities has been her constant inspiration. Her work is helping to protect their habitat for generations to come. She is also an active contributor to the Victoria Walks in both their newsletter and their internet pages.



President's Report 2022/2023

I thank you for the privilege of being the president of this wonderful group for the past year.

This group remains a very well-respected environmental voice in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. We continue the vision that was outlined from its very formation in 1989, looking to protect and enhance the Moonee Ponds Creek environs and its tributaries.

We continue to have positive relationships with all other stakeholders. Like any community group, that does not mean that we always see things in the same way as other stakeholders and so much of our efforts over the last twelve months have been spent raising our concerns with statutory authorities, local MPs, local Councillors and Council officers. I'm pleased to say that when we do disagree, we always express our views unequivocally but in a thoughtful, calm and respectful manner and so even after disagreements our relationships remain positive.

President's Report (continued)

When called upon, our members really come to the fore. Whether it be writing submissions, letterboxing or emailing decision makers. Our members join in tree planting and in many other tasks they are passionate and persistent. Recently I was phoning a local Councillor and when I introduced myself as the President of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek his immediate comment was 'John, I have been bombarded by members of your group.' I was delighted with that comment.

One of the most exciting activities this year is the reimagining of the section of the Moonee Ponds Creek currently taking place in Strathmore. This is progressing very well and is the culmination of years of advocacy from so many in this group. It is encouraging that the Federal Government have committed a further \$5 million to continue naturalising of the creek a little further along. I'm confident that this project is going to be incredibly well received by all creek users.

What does continue to surprise me is that the creek needs us, and others, to continue advocating for it. There are countless little battles that need to be fought and won. There are times when I shake my head in disbelief that some still don't seem to appreciate what an incredibly beautiful asset we have in this creek.

I thank each and every member of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek for continuing to support the creek in so many ways. Whether it is by being proactive in paying your yearly membership subscriptions, right through to being willing to swing into civic action, when called upon to do so, I am grateful to all members. I do want to recognise some specific efforts:

- To our Vice President and Membership secretary, Frank Kinnersley. Thank you for your great work this year. You are always reliable, always knowledgeable and I'm particularly thankful you that you willingly attend events during the daytime that are very difficult for me. Thank you, Frank.
- Earlier this year we were so fortunate that Richard Smith put his hand up for Treasurer. He has provided so much to this group in such a short time. What an asset you have been, Richard. Your knowledge has been invaluable. Thank you so much Richard.

- Kaye Oddie continues to be a wonderful contributor to this group. She helps monitor our email correspondence and continues to be a driving force behind so many of our activities. She continues to be passionate about improving the Kensington Embankment - even when she has to deal with countless 'red tape' issues - but she has organised a number of planting days there and I'm so grateful to her for all her sterling efforts.
- To the Honourable Kelvin Thomson, who has developed the Moonee Ponds Creek Litter Clean-Up Team that has been very active in cleaning up so many areas along the creek. This is a great initiative, Kelvin. Many thanks also to Neil Sutton for his efforts in this area.
- To David Widdowson for four magnificent editions of *Ponderings*. I know there are a number of contributors but David puts these together as the editor of *Ponderings*, to produce a truly remarkable publication.
- To Anna, Nina and Zoe for administering our Facebook page. Our Facebook page has 2,700 followers and so we get to a much wider audience. Also, thanks to every person that posts items on the page. Some of the images are brilliant! Anna also continues to publish items on iNaturalist and Nina has been active in campaigns, particularly around the Sports Ground Signage Policy, thanks so much Nina.

To each and every member of the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek, thank you for your contribution to our group. Be assured that each and every contribution is valued and deeply appreciated. Thank you all.
- John Kavanagh



Join the Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek for \$20 per year

Help protect and enhance the Moonee Ponds Creek's natural environment. For information and to join, go to mooneepondscreek.org.au and complete the membership form, or write to PO Box 1092, Moonee Ponds.

CALENDAR	Event and Location:	Contact/ Link
Monday, December 11 th , 6.30pm	FoMPC General meeting, at Sam Merrifield Library	mooneepondscreek.org.au

Your Contributions to *Ponderings* are welcome!
Please send your images and stories to fompc.ponderings@gmail.com